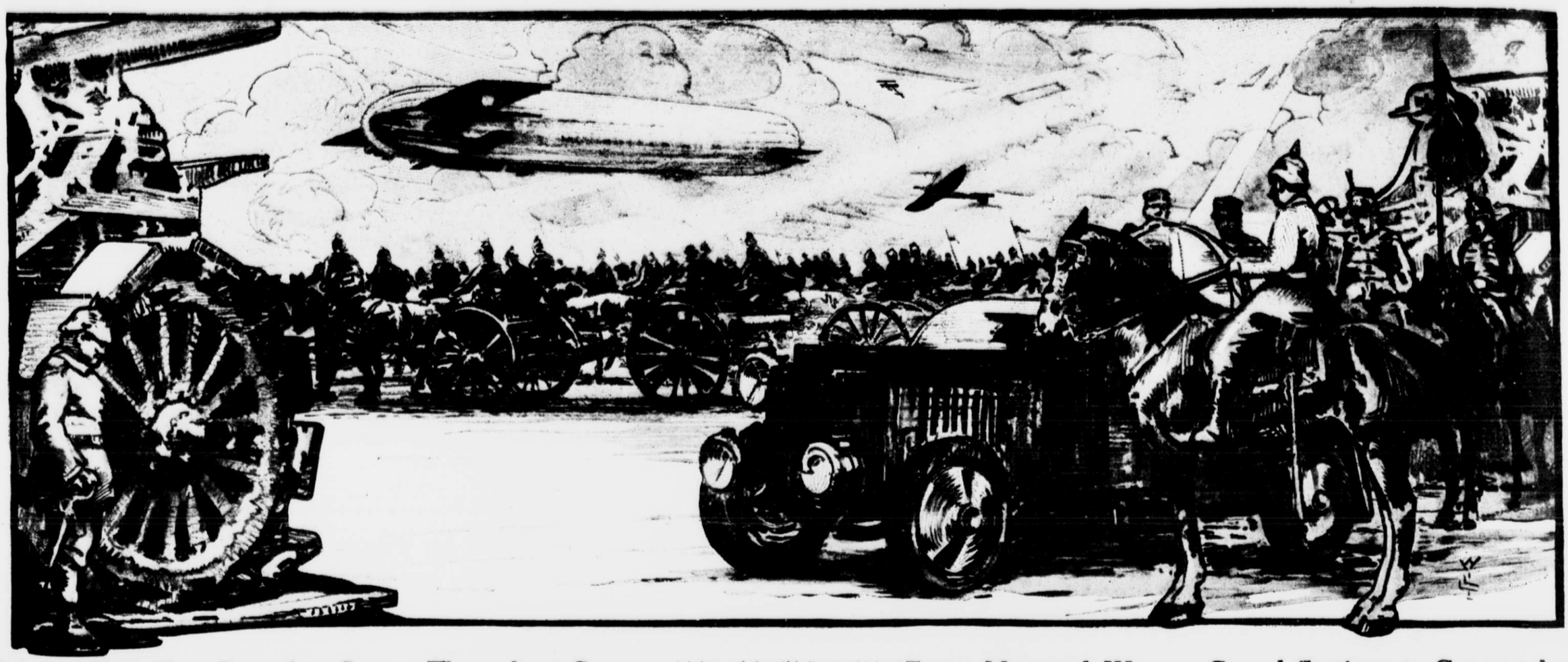
SPIRIT OF HEROIC HAPPINESS PERVADES GERMANY



Edward Eyre Hunt Describes Scenes Throughout Country-side and in Berlin During War Times—Public Worship of Soldiers

By EDWARD EYRE HUNT.

THE first thing I saw in war time Germany was a small cylindrical box, labelled "Geben zu dem."

The hour was midnight; the place was a narrow station platform at Bentheim, just across the German border from Holland. For some reason that Red Cross box, hanging there on the station wall in the glow of electric bulbs yellow as candlelight, suggested to me a collection box at the entrance of a church. There was something peculiarly religious about it. Tall trees stood like columns close about the station; soft night noises came to my ears; two middle aged landsturm soldiers standing guard beside the station door, rifles at their sides, watched, motionless as icons; there seemed to be a certain subdued and reverent feeling in the very atmosphere. I felt as if I had just stepped into an old cathedral.

I turned to a fellow traveller and addressed him in a low voice. "It's like a midnight mass!"

"So it is; so it is," he answered under his breath. Then he blurted out loudly, as if to repel the thought that such a scene could touch him, "Well, put fifty pfennig in the box and come along to a hotel. We got to get some sleep. Got a long journey ahead for us to-morrow."

I dropped some coins noisily into the little box.

"Say," my companion added, as if it were an afterthought, setting down his suit cases and fumbling in his trousers pocket, "will you put that in for me?" He thrust a coin into my hand and walked away.

I pushed the money into the slit in the top of the little box. As it left my fingers I saw a glint of yellow. He had given me a ten mark gold piece!

Next morning we were speeding across Germany toward Berlin. I could hardly take my eyes from the window at first; I wanted to see every tiny detail of this great country in the throes of world war. How would it differ from the Germany of peace time? Were the people beginning to feel the pinch of hunger and unemployment? Was industry at a standstill? What difference would war make in the outward looks of things? But a curious question kept intruding itself into my mind. At last I turned to my neighbor.

"What day is to-day?" I asked.

"Day of the week or month?" he countered.

"Day of the week."

"Monday—wash day. Can't you see Hans's blue shirt and socks hung out to dry on the hedge behind that brick cottage?"

"But I feel as if to-day were Sunday."

"Well, it isn't."

"But doesn't this country give you a sort of 'Sunday feeling'?—as if most of the people had gone to church? Look at those old fellows, those landsturm soldiers—professors and doctors and business men—standing guard in the railway stations in their old blue uniforms, with coats made too large so they can fill them out when they grow fat. They're quiet as priests.

"And look at all the factories we are passing: not a puff of smoke coming out of their stacks. And the canals, without a boat on them, and the streets in the little towns, almost empty. It's Sunday, I tell you. Why, even the black and white cows over there seem to wear a Sunday face!

"And have you noticed that there aren't any horses visible? They're all in use—taking the people to church."

"To war, you mean!" he retorted. "The horses are with the army."

"But look there," I interrupted. "People are at church. See?—there in that little brick chapel behind the box hedge, see? * * * Oh, my God, it's a funeral! That's a churchyard." We stared. "Aren't those black tombstones dreadful! And look at all the little black, white and red flags, and the new graves and the flowers!"

As we sped past, a strange sigh came from the air outside. It was the sound of a volley fired over the newest grave.

At Osnabruck we changed to a military train which had come directly from the battlefields in France. A heavy smell of ether drenched all that one breathed and waxen faced soldiers, unshaven and some of them very dirty, crammed the little compartments.

A splendid young uhlan with a wisp of mustache on his lip leaned negligently against a compartment door, his spur scratching the panel. The front of his green gray uniform was a mass of what seemed to be brick dust; it was dried blood. Infantrymen with bandaged heads, bandaged arms, bandaged legs, or bandaged shoulders blocked the narrow aisles and lay on the floor between the seats. One man with his jaw shot through breathed noisily. Occasionally some one groaned through clenched teeth as he shifted his position. These were the men who were only slightly wounded.

At every station women from the Red Cross came to meet the soldiers with hot bouillon, hot coffee, stretchers and ambulances; and at almost every station we picked up new recruits, mostly officers just being called to the colors. They came in their brand new uniforms with their bright swords at their sides, invariably accompanied by friends who cheered them, and called "Bravo! bravo! congratulations!" as the train pulled out of the station.

In Hanover two women who seemed to be mother and wife of a young hussar just going to the front were at the station to see him off. He was all smiles, but the two women were in awful agony. They fought to keep their self-possession. The mother's fingers clawed holes in the handkerchief she held in her hand to wave when her boy left her, and the wife's lips trembled as she tried to say the happy nothings which would be everything in the world to her soldier in the field.

They smiled to the very last minute and when the train started and the young officer leaned far out of the window, smiling back at them and waving his handkerchief, they shouted after him. "Congratulations! congratulations! God bless you! congratulations!" They were congratulating him on his chance to die for Germany.

There was an air of heroic happiness about the whole train. Every time another train passed us we were cheered and waved at; the car windows would fly open, men, women and even children would lean out calling, waving their handkerchiefs, and smiling—always smiling. Two troop trains went by us, westbound, and their loud hurrahs were electric with feeling.

Little boys, dressed in diminutive uniforms, even to spiked helmets and miniature swords, leaned from the windows of houses to shake German flags in salute; and little six and seven-year-old girls called to us shrilly as we went by. It was a continuous ovation for the men. To come home wounded was to come in triumph, and ether and bandages and painful mutilations were forgotten in the high joy of such a welcome.

Berlin at last! A huge and powerful city as one saw it from the train for the first time; decorated with innumerable flags, as if for a festival, but mirthlessly. Superficially it resembled Chicago; the same flat profile, the same air of incorrigible newness to streets, houses, public buildings and parks; but, unlike Chicago, it seemed terribly in earnest—a determined, aggressive, united and serious minded city.

Eager Men and Women Crowd Stations to Congratulate Soldiers Leaving for Front and to Welcome Home the Wounded

Even the houses had sober faces. In some cities the houses laugh or leer at one; in Berlin they stare. Under the projecting front of a great warehouse I caught a glimpse of two figures which seemed to me a symbol of Berlin—two mighty Cyclopean stone atlases supporting the weight of the building on their broad Germanic backs and shoulders.

The broad platform of the Friedrichsstrasse Bahnhof was crowded with eager men and women awaiting the arrival of our train. Porters, forty-five, fifty, sixty years old, hobbled about gathering up the luggage. Red Cross workers crowded up to take charge of the wounded. Other soldiers in every variety of uniform stood about waiting for trains; some of them in neat, clean brand new outfits with yellow boots that squeaked as they walked and with sprigs of green in their gun barrels; others just back from the battles in East Prussia, in muddy, war worn uniform which they had fought in and slept in and travelled in without change; knapsacks on their shoulders, rifles at their hips.

It was a crowd shifting like quicksilver and every face smiling. Even the sixteen-year-old Mädchen in charge of the newsstand laid down her knitting to watch. (Every woman in Germany is knitting for the soldiers; even seven year-old girls knit as they rock their dollies to sleep.)

Among the first to leap down from the train was a tall Prussian uhlan on furlough. He had been fighting under Von Hindenburg in the East and Von Kluck in the West, he told me. "Such luck!" as he expressed it. He bounded to the platform like an athlete, although I knew he was wounded; stood stiff for a moment, clicked his heels, saluted with that abrupt mechanical snap of the forearm which is the perfection of impersonal, unemotional recognition, then flung his arms out like a little boy about the shoulders of a splendid gray bearded giant in general's uniform and kissed him like a girl.

That nineteen-year-old boy wore over his heart the famous Iron Cross of 1914. The man he kissed wore the Iron Cross of 1870-1871.

The mark of the cross and the sword was on everything. Among the quiet serious looking crowds which thronged all the downtown streets during the afternoons and evenings and which overflowed into those uptown avenues which still were lighted at night every fifth man was a soldier. And the crowd never tired of the sight of them. The paid each uniform the flattering attention of staring at it as if it were the first they had ever seen.

The procession was bewildering. There were all sorts and conditions of men in uniforms—Prussian generals, in gold and gray and blue; a haggard military doctor just come from the hospital and still smelling of ether; dirty, tired infantrymen back from the battle line in East Prussia, limping along in the gutter; a mountineer in Alpine green uniform, with a green feather in his flat cap; aristocratic hussars in uniforms of a blazing red, marching along erect as automatic dolls; an officer of the famous Death's Head Hussars, a white skull grinning down from his black shako and the cords across his breast shaking as he walked; companies of middle aged landsturm marching down the street; a crack regiment of the guard doing the goose step at the corner of Unter den Linden and smacking the pavement until the street echoes like a forest under volley fire; a squad of Red Cross workers marching in civil dress, each wearing his little white and red arm band and each carrying a tin satchel; cavalry on coal black horses riding by like centaurs; a new regiment off for the war with band blaring and colors snapping in the wind; an adjutant in a gray military automobile with a horn that boomed like a cannon; convalescent soldiers, by ones, twos, half dozens, walking the streets to get the air, limping painfully or guarding a bandaged arm or shoulder or head from the jostling of the crowd.

Then, like a parody of all these, twenty small boys in uniforms, with spiked caps, wooden swords and an ingenious wooden cannon mounted on a gun carriage which would lower and raise and pivot about like a real field gun, marching down the Friedrichsstrasse with patriotic flags and a drum.

Two soldiers talking together on the street would immediately attract a group of respectful listeners. One soldier walking along in the gutter, where the sidewalks were crowded, would be the cynosure of all eyes. Street cleaners and bus drivers made way for the soldier, pedestrians nudged one another to give him room; in the restaurants he was immediately given the best place. These attentions all seemed to be unconscious; certainly they were ungrudging. They were given as if the soldier were obviously a superior order of being.

This public worship of the army is a wonderful thing to see, and the army

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Russia Fighting to Preserve the National Life and Religion

By STEPHEN GRAHAM.

BRITAIN is fighting for disarmament and universal peace. France is fighting to save herself from the monster who has already devoured a portion of her side, Alsace-Lorraine. Germany is fighting to impose her order on the rest of the world—to make us all, as it were, wear German uniforms. Germany has had great dreams; one of them was of a German and Austrian belt from Helgoland to Constantinople; another was of a finally subjugated France and, possibly, of a Belgian absorbed into the German Empire. Germany, taking herself seriously as the standard bearer of western civilization, considers that she has carried order, cleanliness, education and national efficiency to a point of perfection unattainable by the people of other countries. Russia is fighting to preserve her national life and religion.

Of all nations the most abhorrent to the Germans must be the Russians. The Russian character, temperament and mind are all opposed to the German soul. The Russian subtlety and contradictoriness, the Russian mysticism and unpracticalness, above all things Russian national untidiness, are intolerable to the German. The German is filled with loathing directly he passes the Russian frontier; the difference between the well built towns, storehouses and firm highways of eastern Prussia and the wildernesses of Russian Poland is almost incredible.

To enter Russia is to step down into an inferior world—a world that needs setting right. "Russia offers wonderful material for the making of history," said Bismarck; "let but its feminine type of population be interbred with our strong masculine Germans." "The Slavonic peoples are not a nation," wrote Emperor William, "but rather soil on which a nation with a historic mission might be grown." "The Slavs are impossible," says Francis Joseph; "I had rather be a sentry outside a tent in our army than monarch of a Slav nation."

In this it is impossible not to see a considerable amount of German stupidity. The Germans are going to suffer terribly through their ignorance of the strength of Russia, through their inability to realize to what an extent the Russians are national.

It is because of their national individuality and of their vast population of like faith, like tongue and like point of view that the Russians go to the front in confidence. When the Germans attack the Russians they are attacking a nation that has a background of 8,000 miles.

This war has come as a relief to Russia, uniting all parties under one idea. For a long while Russia has been subjected to a strong German influence. Germany has long felt that "something might be done" with Russia, and it has done all it could to give a Germanizing tint to Russian government. It is not without significance, that story in Dostoieffsky's "Adult," of the German who shot himself through vexation at the idea that Russia might come to nothing.

The brutality with which the Russian revolutionary movement was put down was not only approved by the Germans but received a considerable amount of inspiration from them.

Prince Troubetskoi, in a recent article, is even ready to say that there lies a German hidden under many Russian breasts. If that is so, it may account for many a brutal act and much of the feeling of oppression in Russia.

When war was declared Russia suddenly grew lighter, as if an evil spirit had jumped off her back. German subjects were put under arrest and sent to remote places. German shops were closed, German goods tabooed. Berlinskaya street became Londonskaya, St. Petersburg became Petrograd, Schlusselburg became Oreshof, Kronstadt something else; in many schools the German language was given up and English taken instead; the Hotel Vienna, three doors from me, become the Hotel of Holy Victory.

But not only that. A little German devil of harshness and iron heedlessness jumped out and disappeared, and the Grand Duke commander in chief proclaimed reconciliation to the Poles, and every one became kinder to one another. People in Russia are naturally kind; they have become even gentler since the war began.

"The German title Graf is related to the Russian verb grabit—to grab, to steal," says Rozanof of the *Novoe Vremya*. "The Germans have always been a predatory race as far as the Slavs are concerned. They are the very opposite of the Russians. In the whole of Russian literature there is not one page in which mockery is made of poverty, of suffering, of a girl who has been betrayed or of a child that is illegitimate. Russian literature is one long hymn to the injured and insulted." (V. V. Rozanof, "The Russian Idea.")

The whole of Russian popular feeling is of tenderness rather than rapacity, and though, of course, there lurks in the Russian soul not only the brutal German but the more brutal Tatar, yet it is love to one another, fellow sympathy in suffering, and gentle sociability that keep the great nation together. It is these sentiments that unite them round the sacred ark of the race.

The Germans, sneering at the weak and at the victims of their lust for power, with their brutal materialism and their cruelty, represent that which is most foreign to the Russian heart and, consequently that which is most abhorrent to all the people.

One of the commonest headings in Russian papers is "Holy War." A war, if it is going to have any success in Russia, must be a holy war. The Crimean war was a holy war to protect the Russian pilgrims from the persecutions of the Turks. The Japanese war never succeeded in getting thought holy—that was why it failed so disastrously. This war is holy to every one, and its motto is getting rid of the German spirit in life, getting rid of the sheer materialistic point of view, getting rid of brutality and the lack of understanding of others.

The great spiritual power of the war has worked miracles in the social life of the people.

How seriously the war is taken! "What do you make of the war?" I asked a well known Russian the other day.

"It is the last judgment," said he. "Every one has been handed in his account. Now we've got to get square with destiny. We must realize all our resources of will and faith and health and put them in front of our national life to save it.

"It reminds me of the crisis in the drama of 'Peer Gynt.' You remember when the button moulder came and said to *Peer* that his day was done and that he must be put into the melting pot and recast as some one else. *Peer* searched in his history and in his life for something that could redeem him. Only in the peasant girl *Solveig* did he find refuge from the moulder.

"So with Russia—to her also the button moulder has come and offered to melt her up with a strong alloy of Germany into something new. She must go to her peasants if she wishes to remain herself. In the hour of distress it is our peasants who will save us." For Russia, above all things, is fighting that she may go on being herself.

Every one who loves Russia believes in her personal destiny.

She is the youngest of the nations; she has a great life before her.

She fights, and as she fights the year grows colder and more bitter. Commissaries have visited Moscow buying heavy overcoats for the army for the winter, and we know that the war becomes heavier, gloomier.

Yet now and again we spare a glance beyond winter and ask what it will be like when the foe is beaten.

Will not Russia emerge greater than before—the true mother of the Slav races?

Will not the Eastern Church remain unshaken, surer of itself, with all its heritage of early Christian tradition and its present day spiritual strength?